



Embassy of the United States of America, Manila

Public Affairs Section

# NEWS RELEASE

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## United States Authorizes Disaster Relief Assistance

To assist victims of Typhoon Juan (international name, Megi), and in response to a formal request from the Government of the Philippines, U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Harry K. Thomas, Jr. instructed the U.S. Embassy to authorize disaster relief assistance through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID plans to make available \$100,000 to help those affected by the typhoon.

Currently on official travel in the United States, Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr. met Friday with members of the National Security Council, with officials at the Department of State and with Senator Jim Webb of Virginia to discuss the potential impact the storm could have and the importance of a quick U.S. Government response. This afternoon Ambassador Thomas said, "Our thoughts and prayers are with all Filipinos during this difficult time. I'm heartened and impressed by the effective measures taken by the people and the Government of the Philippines to meet the threat posed by the storm." He added, "My Embassy team is in constant contact with Philippine authorities and NGO representatives to determine how we can be of further assistance."

At the request of the Government of the Philippines, some U.S. troops and equipment currently in the Philippines for the annual CARAT and PHIBLEX exercises, along with aircraft and personnel from the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines, both here under the Visiting Forces Agreement, have been diverted for use by Philippine counterparts to conduct assessments of the areas impacted by Typhoon Juan. Additional assistance will be determined based on the results of these initial assessments.

Ambassador Thomas will be coordinating U.S. military and USAID support for typhoon relief efforts. "It is during challenging times like these that the close partnership between the militaries of the United States and the Philippines proves its value," the Ambassador noted. "We all recall that American and Filipino soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder to provide assistance during tropical storms Ondoy and Pepeng last year. In that same spirit, we stand ready to work with our Filipino partners to assist those affected by Typhoon Juan," the Ambassador added.

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